

Testimony to the Commerce Committee  
March 15, 2012  
In support of Raised House Bill # 5466:  
AN ACT CONCERNING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE BUSINESSES  
By Pamela DonAroma, Executive Director, Futures, Inc./Good Cause Gifts

Good Cause Gifts is a division of Futures, Inc. is a 501(C) 3 offering educational services, employment opportunities and independent living and recreational services for individuals with disabilities throughout Connecticut.

Good Cause Gifts mission is simple. We are dedicated to helping individuals with disabilities live fully integrated lives within their community by providing employment opportunities and social activities. We strive to create sustainable and innovative jobs in Connecticut at competitive wages. Good Cause Gifts is a retail store selling fine gifts, accessories and fair trade items. We would like to replicate this model throughout Connecticut ensuring that more individuals with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual and developmental disabilities are offered the opportunity to have meaningful employment, to live productive lives and to give back to their community.

Good Cause Gifts a Division of Futures, Inc. supports Raised House Bill #5466 and a new model for doing business in our state for two major reasons:

- (1) It is a way for underfunded non-profits that struggle to keep their doors open and increase community support and resources. For profit social enterprises will contribute to the support of non-profits. Social Enterprises will create additional employment for individuals with disabilities and those that support them.
- (2) It will create increased opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to secure meaningful employment with Social Enterprise Businesses that commit to support them. Good Cause Gifts is a model of a social enterprise. It is a for profit business, LLC. whose parent company is Futures, Inc, a 501 (C) 3 Corporation. Good Cause Gifts is addressing the chronic unemployment of individuals with disabilities. The national unemployment rate for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities is nearly 85%, creating poverty, seclusion and increasing the reliance on entitlement programs. As an Associate Member of the ARC CT creating a social enterprise has allowed us to increase employment opportunities and pay competitive wages to individuals with disabilities where employment options are very limited or non-existent.

It is not often that a new business model has an organization to lean on for support. reSET: Social Enterprise Trust is committed to promoting, preserving and protecting social enterprise. As an Associate Member of the ARC CT our representative has been working with reSET and is confident that this organization will be a major contributor to non-profit efforts.

The Committee's efforts are very much appreciated. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions, for clarification or to arrange a visit at Good Cause Gifts. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Good Cause Gifts  
150 Mill Street Berlin, CT 06037  
860-828-1752  
[www.gooddcausegifts.com](http://www.gooddcausegifts.com)